

Public Notice – Environmental Project

PURPOSE OF NOTICE:

The Department of Environmental Quality seeks public comment on the state's response to the environmental aspects of a proposed project in Virginia coastal waters.

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD:

March 5, 2013 to March 26, 2013

TYPE OF RESPONSE:

Federal Consistency Determination

DEQ is reviewing a proposed federal action to determine if it is consistent with the Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program (VCP) established pursuant to the U.S. Coastal Zone Management Act. The VCP seeks to protect the quality of air, water or other natural resources in Virginia's coastal area.

NAME OF AGENCY PROPOSING THE PROJECT :

DOC/NOAA/National Marine Fisheries Service

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) proposes to implement Amendment 8 to the Consolidated Atlantic Highly Migratory Species (HMS) Fishery Management Plan (FMP) to address North Atlantic swordfish commercial fishery management measures. The most recent stock assessment, conducted in 2009, indicates that the North Atlantic swordfish population is fully rebuilt and overfishing is no longer occurring. Domestic catches have remained below the U.S. North Atlantic swordfish quota allocated by the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT). The current swordfish handgear permit is a limited access permit, and is often difficult or expensive to obtain. Based upon the rebuilt status of North Atlantic swordfish, renewed interest in commercial handgears that are lower in bycatch and bycatch mortality, and the availability of swordfish quota, Amendment 8 proposes to provide additional commercial fishing opportunities for persons using swordfish handgears. NMFS has submitted a Federal Consistency Determination that finds the proposed action consistent, to the maximum extent practicable, with the enforceable policies of the Virginia Coastal Zone Management Program.

HOW TO COMMENT:

DEQ accepts comments from the public by e-mail, fax or postal mail. All comments must include the name, address and telephone number of the person commenting and be received by DEQ within the comment period. The public may review the project documents at DEQ's central office in Richmond.

CONTACT FOR PUBLIC COMMENTS, DOCUMENT REQUESTS AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

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